

Honorable Julius Genachowski, Chairman
Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

Dear Chairman Genachowski and Commissioners Copps, McDowell, Clyburn, and Baker,

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to you all in regards to the recent FCC proposal. I can't even begin to express the impact that VRS has had in my own personal life. I use VRS to communicate with my Deaf Grandfather, Deaf parents, Deaf Aunt and Uncle, Deaf brother and sister-in-law, Deaf in-laws, and Deaf nieces and nephews, in addition to several other extended family members. As a matter of fact, I have found the functional equivalence that I have experienced with VRS to have completely changed the experience that I, as a child with a predominately Deaf family have experienced as far as options to be able to communicate with them.

I remember when my only option to communicate with my mom or dad while in high school was to have a prerearranged codes that we set up which meant that they had to sit and watch when the phone would ring and cause the light to flash so that they could count the specific number of flashes that were code for either "pick me up- leave now?", "pick me up- give me 30 min?", or even "I have a ride?". A few years later I was able to call through TRS (TTY relay) which was an improvement but in no means functional equivalence for telecommunication that I as a hearing person experienced even 25 years ago. Deaf people were able to see printed words but had no sense of the expression or inflection that was used by the Hearing caller. Today, through VRS I am now able to make calls to my family from anywhere (the car, the middle of the grocery store, or even from Disney World to wish my mom a Happy Mother's Day) and know that when I call through VRS the interpreter can convey all the voice inflections that are heard in English and incorporate them appropriately while using American Sign Language.

My young daughters know how to call up Grandma and talk through VRS and they also know that when they say the words I LOVE YOU it may be an interpreter's voice they hear in response but they know that that it was from Grandma not the interpreter. The true meaning of functional equivalence is when we and our future generations understand that ANYONE and EVERYONE who wants to make a call to a friend, family, or business will only need to pick up the phone, remote for the videophone,

or any other device will be able to so and to be able to use our own native language.

The FCC proposal that has the 3 tiers seems to be excluding the fact that customers have the right to choose a company that they feel offers the best:

- ? technology
- ? speed of answer
- ? outlook for possible upgrades to product
- ? customer relations
- ? interpreters
- ? 911 service
- ? and perhaps many other things?

As a result of each person choosing a company that meets their preferences there is at this point one company who by response of the consumers does satisfy all of those requirements and more. Now with the proposed tier system, Sorenson will be penalized for their excellence. The consumer always has a choice of their VRS provider. If you allow Sorenson to be railroaded and forced out of the market due to the sheer number of calls and dreadfully lower pay rate then someone else will have to step up to the plate. This then begs the question? WHO will want these new consumers which will then have a domino effect on that company and then pushes that VRS company into Tier 3 and then they will find themselves perhaps filing for bankruptcy, and then the next company, and so on until we find ourselves back in the ?stone ages of technology.? Are you asking that Deaf people give up free choice, having to put up with ?something better than nothing?, or are you willing to make a statement that says that IF a company is meeting a customer/consumer?s need and preferences then they should not be penalized but instead be sought by other companies as a model of excellence. Will my children will have to start calling through TTY relay to Grandma or Grandpa and not have the interpreter be able to show in ASL that the children?s voices are higher pitched or that they hear laughing and showing it in ASL? Are you not going to allow all of our family and generations to come to be able to communicate using their native language? Surely you will not go this route. You wouldn?t like it and if you have experienced the amazing difference in telecommunication, then you would not want to see anything be taken away from VRS but instead, find ways to enhance the incredible experience.

I respectfully beg you to rethink this decision and if you decide a tier system is the best approach then at least make it all within 1-2% rather than the close to 40% that is currently proposed. You want to encourage companies to strive for their best so that it becomes a goal rather than a deterrent.

I thank you for your time and hope that you will take the opportunity to make some phone calls through VRS and then compare them to the types of calls we have traditionally had to make before VRS came on the market. You will be amazed at the difference.

Thank you and have a GREAT day!